



TEA PLANTATIONS IN INDIA.

Government Leading the Way—Scottish Gardeners—Work and Wages.

[Quarterly Review.]
Of late years much attention has been given to the growth of tea and coffee in India. The soil and climate in many parts have been found very favorable to their production. During years of residence in the hill provinces of Kumaon we had tea plantations all around us. The government led the way in this enterprise. Chinamen, trained in their own country to grow and manufacture tea, were brought to the province, and under their management tea of excellent quality was produced. The government gradually retired and left the field open to private enterprise. Many plantations are now in the province, a few belonging to individuals, but the greater number to companies, organized and sustained mainly by European capital.

The management of some of the largest plantations has been intrusted to experienced Scotch gardeners, who have soon made themselves acquainted with the process of tea-growing and tea-making, and have dispensed with the services of the Chinamen, most of whom have returned to their own country. The entire work is now done by natives of the province under European direction. Most of the gardens are laid out on tracts of mountain and forest which had been the property of the government, and the land has consequently been acquired with an ease which would not have been practicable had it belonged to natives, who in such matters are manoeuvring to degree which few Europeans can follow and haggle to an extent the most patient can scarcely bear.

Of the many thousands of pounds laid out on these plantations a large portion has gone to the workmen in the shape of wages. We have often seen the people in the fields and in the factory, and we do not remember to have seen them since subjected to the whip or the stick. They are well looked after to prevent them from shirking work and from stealing tea, but we have observed no instance of cruel treatment. In fact they know well that if cruelly or unjustly treated they have only to go to the authorities to obtain a patient hearing. The sick are supplied with medicine.

We have occasionally approached a tea plantation on a Saturday afternoon, and we have seen them trooping away merrily to their homes—which, we were told, were miles distant—with their week's wages to spend the Sunday with their families and return on Sunday night to the plantation to resume work on Monday morning. Among tea plantations there is no doubt the diversity which is found in every class, but if we can judge from what we have seen—and we have seen much of their relation to their workmen, we can say the relation is as pleasant as can well be found between employers and employed.

Can Unset Diamonds be Identified?

[New York Star.]
Wanting to buy a few precious stones to distribute among my friends before I get my life insured and go to the sea-side, I interviewed a diamond merchant down-town, and while we were comparing the gems the conversation turned upon the difficulty of identifying diamonds. Some people assert that they can recognize a certain stone as accurately as other people can recognize a certain man. You take your diamonds to a certain man, and he tells you they are not real, or you are sure that you receive the same stones again, although others less valuable, or even paste imitations, may have been substituted. But the experts are sure that they can never be deceived unless the stone has been recut. Upon this point the diamond merchant told me a good story.

One day another firm in the same business—call it Smith & Jones—sent him a diamond, which was very fine and very cheap. It was set in a ring, so that he could not weigh it; but after examining it carefully he concluded that its cheapness must be caused by some defect, and so he returned it to the owners. The next week an agent called with another fine, cheap stone, which my friend concluded to purchase. Before binding the bargain he thought he would take it over to Smith & Jones and see what they said about it. They praised it enthusiastically. "Why it's a bargain!" cried Smith, and so my friend bought the diamond.

"Ah! said Jones, when they met the next day, 'you did buy our stone after all, and you paid \$20 more for it than we asked for it originally.'"

This was gall and wormwood. My friend hurried back to his office and looked at the diamond. Sure enough, it was the stone which Smith & Jones had sent to him. The clever firm had angled for him through an agent and caught him nicely. He matched the diamond, had a pair of ear-rings made and bided his time.

At last he gave ear-rings and his price to an agent and sent him out to sell them. The agent came back and said: "Smith & Jones want one of these stones. Will you sell the pair?"

"Yes," said the diamond merchant, "sell them this one," and he took one of the stones out of its setting; "the price is so much a carat, as the color is very fine."

When the agent returned with the check my friend sat down and wrote Smith & Jones the following note:

"Quite! You have bought back your own stone and given me \$27 profit. I prefer Pomegranate."

It was a case of diamond cut diamond, and it confirmed my doubts as to the possibility of identifying unset stones.

California as a Petroleum Producer.

[Frank Leslie's Illustrated.]
California is now third in the list of petroleum producing states of the United States. Pennsylvania leads, and New York is second. After California, West Virginia, Ohio and Kentucky. A little oil is found in Colorado, Wyoming and New Mexico, although not much has been obtained in the latter places.

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